Siyeh Creek Culvert
Spanning Siyeh Creek, on Going-to-the-Sun Road
Glacier National Park
Flathead County
Montana

HAER No. MT-81

WEST GLACIER

HAER
MONT,
15-WEGLA,
18-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Engineering Record
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, DC 20013-7127

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18-

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

SIYEH CREEK CULVERT
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Location: Spanning Siyeh Creek, on Going-to-the-Sun Road, approximately thirty-five miles northeast of the park entrance at West Glacier, Glacier National Park, Montana
UTM: Logan Pass Quad. 12/3037600/5397480

Date of Construction: 1931

Structural Type: Reinforced concrete slab culvert with masonry arch facade

Contractor: Colonial Building Co., Spokane, Washington

Subcontractor: A.R. Douglas, Kalispell, Montana

Engineer: Bureau of Public Roads

Owner: Clacier National Park

Use: Road culvert

Significance: The Siyeh Creek Culvert is one of approximately seventeen prominent masonry and concrete structures on Coing-to-the-Sun Road in Glacier National Park. The 51-mile stretch of scenic road is significant as a unique engineering accomplishment of the early twentieth century, and as the first product of a 1925 cooperative agreement between the National Park Service and the Bureau of Public Roads. As with other structures on the road, the culvert's designers used a masonry arch facade in an attempt to make it blend with the park scenery.

Project Information: Documentation of the Siyeh Creek Culvert is part of the Coing-to-the-Sun Road Recording Project, conducted during the summer of 1990 under the co-sponsorship of HABS/HAER and Glacier National Park. Researched and written by Kathryn Steen, HAER Historian, 1990. Edited and transmitted by Lola Bennett, HAER Historian, 1992.

For measured drawing, see HAER MT-67B, sheet 1.

Going-to-the-Sun Road

The Siyeh Greek Gulvert is at the base of a large embankment that bridges the gulch between Piegan Mountain and Going-to-the-Sun Mountain on Going-to-the-Sun Road, a scenic park road that winds through the spectacular mountains and valleys in the middle of Glacier National Park. The 51-mile road, built in sections between 1911 and 1933, and rebuilt during the next two decades, runs east and west through the park. Starting in the west, the road runs from West Glacier, along the 10-mile eastern shore of Lake McDonald and then up McDonald Greek for an additional ten miles. About one mile beyond the junction with Logan Greek, the road begins its ascent to Logan Pass. The road climbs at a 6-percent grade, passes through a tunnel, and turns at a major switchback called "The Loop." Following the contours of the sides of Haystack Butte and Pollock Mountain, the road passes over several bridges, culverts, and retaining walls before reaching Logan Pass. The road descends to the east along the sides of Piegan Mountain and Going-to-the-Sun Mountain before running along the north shore of St. Mary Lake. The road exits the park as it crosses Divide Greek near St. Mary, Montana.[1]

Significance of the Road

Going-to-the-Sun Road is significant as an outstanding engineering achievement of the early twentieth century. In addition, the road was the first product of the interagency cooperative agreement between the National Park Service (NPS) and the Bureau of Public Roads (BPR). The agreement, signed in 1925, allowed the National Park Service to utilize the roadbuilding expertise of the Bureau of Public Roads while still retaining control to protect the landscape.[2]

Siyeh Creek Gulvert

By 1930, Going-to-the-Sun Road was complete except for ten miles east of Logan Pass. During 1931 and 1932, two contractors worked on this final section. The Golonial Building Company of Spokane, Washington, won the contract for the 5½-mile section of road abutting Logan Pass. Golonial subcontracted a large portion of their contract to A.R. Douglas of Kalispell, Montana. Through the various stages of construction, Douglas worked on more Going-to-the-Sun Road contracts than any other contractor and had a reputation among BPR and park officials as an effective "dirt mover."[3]

Douglas needed to move a massive amount of dirt on the bend in the road at Siyeh Greek. Siyeh Greek flows down between Piegan and Going-to-the-Sun Mountain and a considerable amount of fill went into the crevice between the mountains to support the road. The culvert itself measures 10'x10', but is dwarfed by the surrounding embankment.[4]

Most of the fill and masonry used on the road came from excavation for the road. Douglas used several dump trucks, power shovels, and Gaterpillars to move material.[5]

Description

The Siyeh Creek Culvert is a reinforced concrete slab with a 15'-5½" high masonry arch facade set into a 27' high embankment. The opening to the culvert itself measures approximately 10'x10' and is flanked by masonry wing walls. The area around the Siyeh Creek culvert is full of talus slopes--particularly below the road level, and has three pipe culverts in the immediate vicinity.

ENDNOTES

1. See the Historic American Engineering Record report HAER MT-67 on the Going-to-the-Sun Road.

2. C.H. Purcell, F.A. Kittredge, J.A. Elliott, T.C. Vint, and C.J. Kraebel, Suggested Procedure for Cooperation Between the National Park Service and the Bureau of Public Roads in Major Traffic-Way Projects Within the National Parks, April 22, 1925 (Record Group 79, National Archives, Washington, D.C.)

3. Walter A. Averill, "Benching the Transmountain Highway from Solid Rock in Glacier National Park," Pacific Builder and Engineer (May 7, 1932), p. 26; W.H. Lynch, BPR District Engineer to L.I. Hewes, Deputy Chief Engineer, July 31, 1931 (Record Group 79, National Archives).

4. Averill, p. 26.

5. Averill, p. 26.

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Averill, Walter A. "Benching the Transmountian Highway from Solid Rock in Glacier National Park," Pacific Builder and Engineer (May 7, 1932), pp. 24-28.

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